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COMMERCIAL FISHERIES OUTLOOK

January - March 1964

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Fish and Wildlife Service - Bureau of Commercial Fisheries

GENERAL FISHERY SITUATION

Total U. S. estimated commercial fisheries catch during '63 was 4,650,000,000 lbs. compared with 5,256,000,000 lbs. during '62. This was the lowest catch since 1953 when 4,487,000,000 lbs. were landed. Landings of menhaden, groundfish, and Maine herring were down; shrimp landings up.

Cold-storage holdings of edible fishery products Dec. 1, '63 = 235.8 mil. lbs.; Dec. 1, '62 = 219.5 mil. lbs.; Dec. 1, '61 = 194.6 mil. lbs. Halibut, shrimp, and perch fillets in substantially larger supply than corresponding period '62.

Wholesale price index for edible fishery products in Nov. '63 was 106.1% of the 1957-1959 average. This is a drop of 10.3% from a year earlier. Lower prices on frozen halibut, salmon, whitefish, shrimp, and flounder fillets were responsible for most of the decline in the index.

Information on the catch of groundfish and ocean perch in New England indicates that production of fillets from these species in '63 was approximately 84.3 mil. lbs. compared with 90.5 mil. lbs. produced in '62. This was the smallest production since the 1930's.

Imports during Jan.-Nov. '63 were generally higher than same period last year for blocks and slabs, most groundfish fillets, shrimp, sardines (not-in-oil), and fish meal. A substantial drop was noted in imports of frozen tuna, canned tuna in brine, and sardines (canned in oil).

Exports during first 11 months '63 were higher than same period '62 for frozen and canned salmon. fish oils, frozen and canned shrimp, and canned mackerel. Lower exports during same period for canned sardines.

Total catch of menhaden landed in U.S. ports during '63 = 1,726,000,000 lbs.; during '62 = 2,250,000,000 lbs. Lower landings of menhaden in '63 caused reduced tonnage in by-products. Domestic supplies light. Peruvian production lower during last quarter '63. Prices should remain stable this quarter.

IT'S FISH 'N SEAFOOD TIME-------February 12, - March 29, 1964

Salt-water Fish

FISH STICKS & PORTIONS-------

Market - Steady
Supplies - Moderate-to-Liberal
Demand - Good

Fish stick prod. first 9 mos. '63 = 58.6 mil. lbs., about 10% above same period '62. Fish portion prod. same period = 69.1 mil. lbs., up 25%. Combined holdings Dec. 1, '63 = 12.0 mil. lbs.; Dec. 1, '62 = 9.9 mil. lbs. Haddock blocks supply limited. Price rather steady this quarter.

FLOUNDER & SOLE FILLETS ---

Market - Steady
Supplies - Liberal
Demand - Good

Flounder landings in Mass. thru Nov. '63 were a record 83.6 mil. lbs., up 15.6 mil. lbs. same period '62. Second consecutive year of record landings. Holdings Dec. 1, '63 = 8.1 mil. lbs., 31% above Dec. 1, '62. Movement good. Decreased landings this quarter. Price expected to be steady.

COD FILLETS ----------

Market - Steady
Supplies - Moderate
Demand - Good

Cod landings seasonally light this quarter. Inventories fillets Dec. 1, '63 = 10.2 mil. lbs. approximately same as Dec. 1, '62. Supply and demand should be in balance this quarter. Imports thru Nov. '63 = 31.6 mil. lbs., Jan.-Nov. '62 = 31.8 mil. lbs. Reduced inventories this quarter.

HADDOCK FILLETS ----------

Market - Steady
Supplies - Light-to-Moderate
Demand - Good

Landings of haddock first 11 mos. '63 = 102.7 mil. lbs. compared with 117.7 mil. lbs. in same period '62. Light landings expected first 2 mos. this quarter. Holdings fillets Dec. 1, '63 = 15.9 mil. lbs., 18% higher than Dec. 1, '62. Imports first 11 mos. '63 = 20.5 mil. lbs., thru Nov. '62 = 18.5 mil. lbs. Price strong on large and medium sizes.

OCEAN PERCH FILLETS--------

Market - Steady
Supplies - Moderate
Demand - Good

Landings ocean perch during Jan.-Nov. '63 = 102.2 mil. lbs. compared with 117.7 mil. lbs. in same period '62. Light landings expected first 2 mos. this quarter. Holdings fillets Dec. 1, '63 = 15.9 mil. lbs., 18% higher than Dec. 1, '62. Imports first 11 mos. '63 = 20.5 mil. lbs., thru Nov. '62 = 18.5 mil. lbs. Price strong on large and medium sizes.

HALIBUT ----------

Market - Steady
Supplies - Moderate
Demand - Good

U. S. and Canadian landings '63 = 70.8 mil. lbs., down 4.6 mil. lbs. from '62. Holdings in U. S. Dec. 1, '63 = 25.9 mil. lbs., about 15% higher than same date '62. Average ex-vessel price end of season approximately 8 cents lb. below '62.

MACKEREL, CANNED----------

Market - Steady
Supplies - Liberal
Demand - Good

California landings mackerel '63 = 66,578 tons compared with 69,200 tons in '62. Total pack '63 almost 1.3 mil. std. cases. Exports Jan.-Nov. '63 = 4.0 mil. lbs.; Jan.-Nov. '62 = 3.8 mil. lbs. Price steady this quarter.

SALMON, CANNED----------

Market - Steady
Supplies - Moderate
Demand - Good

Alaska pack '63 = 2.7 mil. std. cases; pack in '62 = 3.4 mil. std. cases. Heavy pack pink salmon. Prices lower than year earlier, quality excellent. Kings and silvers in short supply with firm market. Exports thru Nov. '63 = 4.2 mil. lbs. compared with 1.7 mil. lbs. in same period '62.

SARDINES, MAINE ----------

Market - Steady
Supplies - Moderate
Demand - Good

Total Maine sardine pack '63 = 1.5 mil. std. cases; '62 = 2.1 mil. std. cases. Prices firmed up after low quotations last summer and fall. Demand improved and expected to be good this quarter.

TUNA, CANNED ----------

Market - Active
Supplies - Moderate
Demand - Good

California pack '63 = 9.0 mil. std. cases, about 18% lower than '62 pack. Most of the decrease is in light meat tuna. Imports frozen tuna during 11 mos. '63 = 207.4 mil. lbs.; Jan.-Nov. '62 = 255.8 mil. lbs. Sales good. Yellowfin receipts down, both domestic and imports.

Shellfish

CRAB MEAT ----------

Market - Unsettled
Supplies - Moderate
Demand - Good

Labor difficulties have hampered production of Dungeness crabs in some areas. There should be an adequate supply with lower prices when difficulties are resolved. East Coast crab prod. fair this quarter. Holdings Dec. 1, '63 = 4.8 mil. lbs.; Dec. 1, '62 = 3.1 mil. lbs. Imports canned crab meat first 11 mos. '63 = 4.9 mil. lbs.; same period '62 = 3.3 mil. lbs.

SCALLOPS, SEA ----------

Market - Firm
Supplies - Moderate
Demand - Good

Production decline this quarter. Holdings Dec. 1, '63 = 3.5 mil. lbs., 14% above same date '62. Imports Jan.-Nov. '63 = 12.6 mil. lbs. compared with 11.0 mil. lbs. same period '62. Imports should increase as Canada adds additional vessels to scallop fleet. Prices which have leveled off should remain steady.

SHRIMP ----------

Market - Steady-to-Firm
Supplies - Moderate-to-Liberal
Demand - Good

Landings heads-off, So. Atlantic and Gulf Jan.-Nov. '63 = 128.6 mil. lbs., an increase of 28% over same period '62. Imports for 11 mos. '63 = 135.2 mil. lbs.; Jan.-Nov. '62 = 125.4 mil. lbs. Holdings Dec. 1, '63 frozen including breaded = 53.5 mil. lbs.; Dec. 1, '62 = 35.1 mil. lbs., up 52%. Prices lower than year ago. Canned shrimp inventory high.

Industrial Products

FISH MEAL ----------

Market - Firm
Supplies - Light-to-Moderate
Demand - Good

Domestic fish meal production down sharply. First 11 mos. '63 = 223,907 tons compared with 295,730 tons same period '62. Imports Jan.-Nov. '63 = 221,426 tons. Domestic supplies tight. Peruvian prod. lower last quarter. Prices have advanced and should remain firm this quarter.

FISH OIL ----------

Market - Unsettled
Supplies - Light
Demand - Good

Domestic production thru Nov. '63 = 178 mil. lbs. compared with 255 mil. lbs. same period '62. Exports during same period '63 = 229.1 mil. lbs.; '62 = 122.9 mil. lbs. Prices should continue firm this quarter.

GENERAL BUSINESS CONDITIONS

Construction - All types estimated to have totaled $62.6 billion in '63, up from $58.8 billion in '62. It is estimated that this trend will continue to about $65.6 billion in '64.

Consumer prices in November rose to another record 107.4% of the 1957-1959 average. November increase caused chiefly by higher housing and food costs.

Unemployment fell in mid-December to a seasonally adjusted rate of 5.5% of the work force. A month earlier the rate was 5.9%. Lower unemployment among teenagers and adult women was responsible for this decline. However, because of dropoff in outdoor work, the total employment was reduced somewhat in December '63.

THE FOOD SITUATION

Farm output generally in 1963 was 2% higher than the record of a year earlier. This rise was distributed through the crops and livestock sectors of the agricultural economy. Crop output is likely to increase even more during the coming year. Livestock production also is likely to increase in 1964.

Meat - The consumption of red meats is estimated to have reached 170 pounds per person for 1963. This is an increase of 6 pounds per person from 1962. U. S. beef cattle population approximately 107 million head, an increase of 3% from year previous. Supply of beef expected to continue well above year-earlier levels. Lamb crop expected to drop 4 to 5%.

Dairy Products - 1964 milk production expected to be approximately the same as 1963. Output per cow continues to rise, but numbers of cows declining.

Poultry and Eggs - Broilers and fryers first quarter supply larger than year earlier. Egg production expected to exceed 1963, most of the increase likely during first half. Turkey crop also expected to exceed 1963 estimated 92.7 million birds.

Protein Foods - It appears that there will be an ample supply of most high protein foods during the first quarter 1964, including poultry, eggs, beef, pork, and most varieties of fish and seafoods.

Fats and Oils - Total U. S. supplies of edible fats, oils, and oilseeds during the coming marketing year are forecast at a record 17.0 billion lbs. (in terms of oil), about 3% more than the peak quantity available last year. Quantities available for export and carryout stocks will be a record 7.6 billion lbs.; about 4% more than last year. Export prospects for this marketing year are expected to be approximately 4.9 billion lbs., about 15% more than that exported in '62-'63.

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